

Where we have been

Greetings to all of our families and friends of VMAT-203. I would like to kick off my first newsletter by introducing myself. I am LtCol Craig Wirth. I took command of the squadron from LtCol Rahe on 24 March. LtCol Rahe has taken orders to MAG-14 with follow-on assignment this summer to the National War College. We wish him and his family the best of luck during their upcoming move and next assignment. I am very excited to be your new Commanding Officer and hope that these newsletters will serve as an effective way to keep our families informed and engaged in our squadron's activities. I view family readiness as a key enabler of our success. Without family understanding and involvement, it will be hard for our Marines to be focused while on duty. The strength of our force is linked to the strength of our families. It is my hope that these newsletters will keep you better informed as to what your Marines are doing, and also highlight some opportunities that you can take advantage of to strengthen the bonds between our squadron and our families. I look forward to working with each of you over the next two years.

The last few months have been marked by significant activity and some change at VMAT-203. In addition to the Change of Command, February and March were also a busy time for the squadron due to split operations. Split operations occur three times a year when approximately a third of the squadron deploys to Yuma for our periodic air-to-ground training detachments. These dets are critical to the accomplishment of our squadron's training production mission, as Yuma affords better ranges and weather for air-to-ground training. The training done at Yuma provides the "crucible" event for our student replacement pilots. Without these dets, we would be unable to provide the quality of training required to make our pilots "world class". The squadron did very well in Yuma, returning in early March having accomplished all training objectives.

Another change occurred most recently as our Marines living in the barracks moved to a new home. The squadron is now located in building 4868. This brand new facility has state of the art living arrangements and will enhance the quality of life for our Marines living there.

The Road Ahead

The squadron will be very busy over the next few months. We are approaching two major inspections, a Commanding General's Readiness Inspection and an Aviation Maintenance Inspection in the months of May and June respectively. Following these inspections we will have a short breather before beginning preparations for our next Yuma det in July. As always, exact dates are dependent upon US Air Force tankers, and therefore, may vary by a few days.

By the end of the next Yuma det, we should be complete with our pilot training requirement of 30 replacement pilots...this is our Mission and we will focus on the safe execution until completion.

Our Family Readiness Officer is preparing several family events over the upcoming months. These should be fun for all the families, and I hope that everyone can participate. We also would like to offer an invitation to all of our families to provide any suggestions that will help our family readiness program. Your ideas for family events are welcome and appreciated!

If you are interested in being a volunteer in any capacity, I ask that you contact our Family Readiness Officer, Stephanie McPherson, at (252) 466-5345 or email her at stephanie.mcpherson@usmc.mil

KEEPING INFORMED

Please remember, our website and Facebook page remain your best source of information for VMAT-203 activities. These are updated regularly with stories and photographs of your Marines and Sailors, so please be sure to check back often for updates.

As always, I truly appreciate the sacrifice you make for us on a daily basis. I extend my warmest regards to you and yours. Semper Fidelis, and God bless all of you.